

## **Uganda Program Summary – February 2006**

Since 1986, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has waged an insurgency in northern Uganda and the Government of Uganda (GOU) has responded with aggressive counter-insurgency measures. The ongoing conflict has resulted in the displacement of an estimated 80 percent of the population in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira, Apac, Adjumani, and Katakwi districts. Approximately 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently reside in congested camps without adequate food, shelter, water, sanitation facilities, protection, and health care. In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$11 million to support ongoing humanitarian programs targeting vulnerable populations in Uganda.

### **USAID/OFDA ASSESSMENT**

From January 23 to 27, a USAID/OFDA assessment team visited northern Uganda to assess conditions, identify needs, and review ongoing projects. The USAID/OFDA team was composed of the East and Central Africa Regional Coordinator, Disaster Operations Specialist, and Food Security Advisor, and accompanied by personnel from the USAID/OFDA Regional Office in Nairobi and USAID Mission in Kampala. The team traveled with representatives of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in an effort to improve coordination among agencies and discuss the upcoming implementation of the U.N.'s humanitarian cluster approach in Uganda. Improved security and access allowed the team to visit numerous sites in Lira, Kitgum, and Pader districts. The team received reports that IDPs were meeting more of their food needs and global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates were declining. Moreover, the team noted progress in water and sanitation systems as a result of USAID/OFDA's sustained focus on this particular sector. Despite moderate improvements in security, access to land remained restricted, agricultural inputs scarce, and food production limited.

### **WATER AND SANITATION**

According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), access to safe water remains a key challenge in the conflict-affected region. A survey conducted by the GOU Ministry of Health, in coordination with the International Rescue Committee and several U.N. agencies, found that IDPs in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts receive an average of 10.3 liters of water per person per day, well below the recommended Sphere humanitarian standard of 15 liters. Moreover, the average wait time to collect water was 2.7 hours. In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$7.7 million—65 percent of funding for Uganda—to nine relief agencies to carry out improvements in water and sanitation in Adjumani, Gulu, Katakwi, Kitgum, Lira, and Pader districts. Ongoing program activities include drilling and rehabilitating boreholes, installing water tanks and taps, constructing latrines and hand washing facilities, and distributing hygiene promotion kits.

### **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

The provision of adequate health care remains limited in northern Uganda, where crude mortality rates in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts of 1.5 deaths per 10,000 persons per day are above emergency threshold levels of 1.0. GAM rates are slowly declining yet remain precarious. In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$2.6 million to three relief organizations to conduct health and nutrition activities in Apac, Gulu, Kitgum, Lira, and Pader districts. USAID/OFDA continues to support health and nutrition interventions, such as supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers and mobile health clinics, in conflict-affected districts.

### **HUMANITARIAN ACCESS**

Several USAID/OFDA partners reduced or ceased activities for a period of six to eight weeks following a spike in LRA operations in October and November 2005 that included attacks on humanitarian vehicles. By January 2006 most partners had returned to near normal operating levels.